

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /027 W

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R 240709Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9571

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, FR

SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON GERARD ANDRE, NEW FRENCH
AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND

REF: PARIS 0784

1. AMBASSADOR ANDRE WAS HIGHLY RESPECTED BOTH BY HIS DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND BY FINNS DURING HIS LONG TOUR IN HELSINKI (HE WAS THIRD-RANKING AMONG RESIDENT DIPLOMATS WHEN HE LEFT LAST AUTUMN AND WOULD RECENTLY HAVE BECOME DEAN IF HE WERE STILL HERE). HE WAS ONE OF THE FEW AMBASSADORS TO ESTABLISH A CLOSE PERSONAL RAPPORT WITH PRESIDENT KEKKONEN, WHICH WAS ENHANCED BY HIS INTIMATE INVOLVEMENT WITH FRENCH CSCE POLICY. INDEED, ANDRE WAS ABSENT FROM HELSINKI DURING MUCH OF GENEVA PHASE (SEPT 1973-JUNE 1975) OF CSCE NEGOTIATIONS AS LEADER OF FRENCH DELEGATION.

2. DURING HIS TIME IN HELSINKI ANDRE HAD A CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP FORMER DCM ROLLIE WHITE. DESPITE THE FACT THAT ANDRE WAS NOT MARRIED HE BOTH ENTER-TAINED A GREAT DEAL, BUT PREFERRED SMALL DINNERS, AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE LOCAL SOCIAL LIFE. ANDRE, IN CONTRA-DISTINCTION TO MANY FRENCHMEN, HAS NO HANG-UP ABOUT SPEAKING ENGLISH. THIS MAY OF COURSE BE DUE TO HIS LONG SERVICE IN ENGLAND, BUT IT WAS
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NOTICEABLE HOW HE WOULD FROM THE VERY BEGINNING WHEN MEETING A PERSON WHOSE NATIVE LANGUAGE WAS ENGLISH START

OFF WITH ENGLISH RATHER THAN EVEN TESTING THE OTHER PERSON'S KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH. ANDRE ALTHOUGH FAIRLY QUIET AND MILD BY TEMPERAMENT IS NEVERTHELESS A VERY WARM PERSON WITH A GREAT KNOWLEDGE OF AND INTEREST IN THE ARTS AND MUSIC. IN SHORT, NOT JUST A POLISHED MAN, BUT ALSO VERY MUCH A CULTURED PERSON. ANDRE IS A KEEN BRIDGE PLAYER. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT EVEN THOUGH A LIFE-LONG BACHELOR, ANDRE DURING HIS LENGTHY SERVICE IN LONDON FINANCIALLY HELPED A NUMBER OF YOUNG BOYS THROUGH SCHOOL.

3. FROM REFTEL AND FROM EXCELLENT DDI/CRS BIO DATED 11 MARCH 1975, WHICH WE PRESUME HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO BANGKOK, IT WILL BE OBVIOUS THAT ANDRE HAS HAD UNIQUE CAREER IN FRENCH FOREIGN SERVICE. WHEN HE RETIRES, WHICH HE EXPECTS TO DO AFTER HIS TOUR IN THAILAND, HE WILL HAVE SERVED IN ONLY THREE OVERSEAS POSTS; LONDON (24 YEARS); HELSINKI (6 YEARS); AND BANGKOK. AUSTAD

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